GOVERNMENT OF THE VIRGIN ISLANDS

PRESS RELEASE

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Virgin Islands Recognises 13 SMART Schools

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Thirteen public schools have demonstrated their commitment to creating safe, healthy and green learning environments and been certified SMART Schools.

Director of Disaster Management Mr. Jasen Penn explained that safer, more resilient schools has been the goal for the SMART Schools programme since its inception as a partnership between the Department of Disaster Management and the Ministry of Education in 2014.

Mr. Penn, while addressing a recognition ceremony for principals and students said, “This expansion of SMART Schools has been a collaborative effort by the DDM, Ministry of Education, HLSCC Centre for Applied Marine Studies, the BVI Red Cross, and Green VI, and it was supported by a €1.3m grant from the European Union’s Resilience, Sustainable Energy and Marine Biodiversity (RESEMBID) programme.”

Premier and Minister of Finance Honourable Dr. Natalio Wheatley said that the Virgin Islands is a leader when it comes to school safety and resilience, and expressed his gratitude for the vision shared by Government and its partners.

Premier Wheatley said, “The SMART Schools programme – integrating the use of **s** ustained **m**itigation and **a**daptive **r**esilience **t**echniques – is living proof of what we can accomplish when we dream together, work together and act together.” He added, “It demonstrates what is possible when partnership and purpose unite for the greater good of our children and our Territory.”

Minister for Education Honourable Sharie de Castro said that 13 public schools achieving the SMART standard represents the shared vision of safer, greener schools taking root.

“Thousands of students, their families and communities are better equipped to withstand and respond to the challenges of natural hazards, climate change, and environmental concerns,” the minister said, adding that the initiative helps equip VI students to be “leaders in resilience, sustainability and innovation.”

SMART schools must demonstrate that they are safe structures, that staff and students can respond effectively to an emergency, and that they take active steps to reduce their carbon footprint.

The 13 schools recognized for achieving the Safe and SMART standard are:

- Alexandrina Maduro Primary School
- Bregado Flax Educational Centre – Primary Division
- Bregado Flax Educational Centre – Secondary Division
- Claudia Creque Educational Centre
- Ebenezer Thomas Primary School
- Enid Scatliffe Pre-primary School
- Enis Adams Primary School
- Francis Lettsome Primary School
- Ivan Dawson Primary School
- Joyce Samuel Primary School
- Leonora Delville Primary School
- Robinson O'Neal Primary School
- Willard Wheatley Primary School

About SMART Schools:

The SMART Schools initiative in the Virgin Islands is a collaborative effort across government agencies, non-profit organizations, and educational institutions dedicated to enhancing disaster preparedness, environmental sustainability, and overall well-being within the school system. It is based on the Pan-American Health Organisation's Smart Hospital concept, and builds on previous collaborations to ensure that schools are equipped and trained in fire safety, disaster risk reduction, and food safety.

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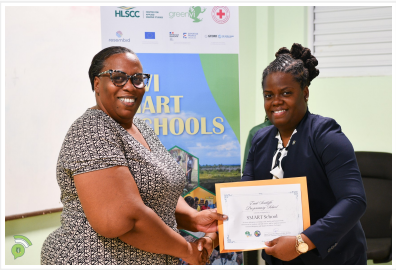
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